
Wisconsin Forestry Notes

September 2003

Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

Drought conditions force emergency fire measures

A continued lack of adequate rain causing drought conditions throughout the state, coupled with low humidities and warm temperatures, are causing high fire danger. DNR is urging people throughout Wisconsin to take special precautions to prevent forest fires. Wisconsinites are asked to postpone debris burning until burning conditions are less volatile and to use extreme caution when operating equipment or machinery so the hot engines don't cause dry vegetation to ignite. Many marshes that normally have water standing in them are now dry and fires in those areas can burn into peat soils, creating fires that are extremely difficult to put out, according to DNR forest rangers.

Over sixty fires burned over Labor Day weekend alone, prompting DNR fire officials to urge extra caution with fire. Burning permits have been suspended and other more stringent emergency measures instituted in parts of nine central Wisconsin counties.

Burning permits issued by DNR were suspended in Chippewa, Monroe, Marathon, Wood, Juneau and Adams Counties effective September 4 and more stringent fire precautions were ordered for Eau Claire, Jackson and Clark Counties. Emergency measures prohibit use of charcoal for fuel but allows use of propane fueled cooking burners. Under the emergency rules, it is unlawful for anyone within the boundaries of the forest fire control areas to: build a campfire in any manner except in developed camping areas; smoke a pipe, cigar or cigarette except at places of residence or in a vehicle equipped with an ash receptacle; throw matches, ashes or burning material from a vehicle; or burn combustible materials including use of a burn barrel. For details about the emergency rule, visit:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/Fire/index.htm>

Community Fire Assessment - First in the state

In April 2003, a nearly 600-acre wildfire burned in Marquette and Waushara Counties. One community reacted to that fire by deciding they needed to do something to help lower their potential to lose everything should another wildfire move through the area. Working with the DNR, the Crystal Lake Homeowner's Association (a.k.a. the Crystal Lake Club) decided to enter into the FireWise Communities USA Recognition Program. Under this program, a community works together - with the guidance of local fire officials - to collectively lower their wildfire ignition potential.

A homeowners association in Marquette and Waushara Counties is beginning the process to become the first "FireWise Community" in Wisconsin - a program that recognizes a community that works to lower potential dangers from wildfire.

On September 8th, the Crystal Lake Club will be taking its first step toward earning recognition status. That step includes allowing DNR wildfire prevention personnel and the Neshkoro Fire Department to complete an assessment of their community. The assessment will focus on issues of vegetation, access, and building materials and their relation to wildfire potential. After the assessment, the Crystal Lake Club will then form a FireWise Board to be responsible for the creation of a plan describing the work they will accomplish. Once the plan is approved by the local fire officials, the Crystal Lake Club may begin the implementation. Once an activity has been completed, the Crystal Lake Club will be eligible to be named Wisconsin's first FireWise Community.

For more information, contact [Jolene Ackerman](#) at (608) 267-7677.

Federal funds available for forestry projects

The federal Forest Service offers grant funding in the areas of Interdisciplinary Forest Management, Clean Water & Healthy Watersheds and Inner City Community Forestry. Proposals are due to the State Forester by October 23, 2003.

Forestry Innovation Grants are available for federal fiscal year 2004. Each state may submit up to two proposals to the USDA Forest Service for these federal funds plus each state can participate on an additional proposal for a multi-state project in each of the three theme areas – Interdisciplinary Forest Management, Clean Water & Healthy Watersheds and Inner City Community Forestry.

The Forest Service anticipates a funding range of \$25,000 to \$100,000 for each state for the two individual state proposals and a maximum of \$150,000 for the multi-state proposals. Any organization may apply for the funds, however all proposals must be sent to DNR Forestry by October 23 and we can forward two of the applications for consideration. Projects selected for funding must provide a 50-50 match. A detailed “request for proposals” packet is online at:

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/ForestryInnovationGrantRFP081503.pdf
Submit your completed application packet to Allison.Hellman@dnr.state.wi.us

Funding For Forestry Education and School Forests

The Forestry Account of the Conservation Fund gifts the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board (WEEB) with \$380,000.00 annually to award forestry education and school forest grants to successful applicants statewide. If you know someone who might be interested in applying, please help pass the word about these funds.

In addition, WEEB initiates a call for special statewide priority focus areas. This year WEEB challenges individuals to: 1) Develop a statewide education and tree dissemination program for public/private K-12 schools that will help them procure trees and that will provide education resources on selection, planting and care of trees and/or; 2) Develop technical assistance materials and workshops to assist school districts with the planning, design and building of capital/site enhancement improvements, such as shelters, bathrooms, trails etc. at their school forest sites. The submission deadline for pre-proposals is September 26th. Locally based forestry education and school forest proposals are due January 17, 2004. Maximum grant awards amount is \$20,000.00 for forestry and school forest grants.

A total of \$380,000 annually is awarded from the Forest Account through the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board for forestry education and school forest grants statewide.

The 2004-2005 grant program application and other helpful information can be obtained by visiting the following website: <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/weeb> or calling the WEEB grants hotline at (715) 346-3805 or by email at weeb@uwsp.edu. Grants will be awarded for the period July 1, 2004-December 31, 2005. Funding is also available for Focus on Energy proposals and general environmental education from separate sources.

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